

Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 SCS-03

SCA-01 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07

INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 IO-11 MC-02 /075 W

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O R 121308Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3309

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1791

CAPETOWN FOR AMEMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, AO, NI, US

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF U.S. CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT/CITIZENS

REF: STATE 34135

SUMMARY: NIGERIANS MIGHT BE WILLING UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS TO ACT
AS INTERMEDIARY TO SECURE RELEASE OF PLANE AND AMCITS IN ANGOLA.
WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT USG BE IN POSITION TO MAKE FULL

AND ACCURATE DISCLOSURE ALL FACTS IN THE CASE, IF APPROACH IS
TO BE MADE TO FMG. END SUMMARY.

2. FMG HAS DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH MPLA GOVERNMENT IN LUANDA,
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INCLUDING AN AMBASSADOR ON THE SCENE. WHILE FMG MIGHT VIEW A REQUEST

FOR ASSISTANCE FROM USG AS RECOGNITION OF ITS COVETED LEADERSHIP ROLE IN AFRICA, WE WOULD FACE SOME POTENTIAL PROBLEMS SHOULD WE ASK NIGERIAN ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER:

A) NIGERINAS ARE SUSPICIOUS AND CRITICAL OF OUR ROLE IN ANGOLA, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. THEY WOULD POSE MANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PLANE, ITS CREW AND ITS MISSION-QUESTIONS WE WOULD HAVE TO ANSWER FULLY AND HONESTLY.

B) NIGERIANS WOULD WONDER WHETHER PLANE WOULD BE USED BY SOUTH AFRICANS IN SUPPORT SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NAMIBIA AND/OR ANGOLA. THEY MIGHT VIEW THE SALE AS VIOLATION OF OUR EMBARGO ON SALE OF ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA. IT ALSO PROBABLE THAT SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN FMG WOULD CHARGE THAT THE PLANE WAS A COVER FOR USG INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

2. BEFORE MAKING APPROACH, THEREFORE, WE WOULD WANT TO BE SURE WE HAD ALL THE FACTS AND COULD RESPOND FULLY AND ACCURATELY TO EXPECTED NIGERIAN QUESTIONS. WE WOULD WANT TO BE ABLE TO GIVE NIGERIANS UNEQUIVOCAL ASSURANCES THAT PLANE NOT RPT NOT A PARTY TO U.S. INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AND THAT PLANE NOT RPT NOT INTENDED FOR USE BY OR IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA OR NAMIBIA.

3. IT POSSIBLE THAT FMG WOULD DECLINE ACT AS INTERMEDIARY. IT COULD SUGGEST INSTEAD THAT WE DEAL DIRECTLY WITH MPLA AND OFFER PUT US IN CONTACT WITH NETO GOVERNMENT. WE WOULD REQUIRE GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO SUCH A PROPOSAL, INVOLVING AS IT WOULD THE POSSIBLE QUESTION OF IMPLIED DE FACTO RECOGNITION OF MPLA GOVERNMENT.

4. CONCLUSION: FACT THAT WE ARE SELLING AIRCRAFT TO SOUTH AFRICA WHICH HAS POTENTIAL, AT LEAST, OF BEING UTILIZED TO SUPPORT SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY IN NAMIBIA AND ANGOLA RUNS RISKS OF ROUSING NIGERIAN IRE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER, IF POINTS PARA 2 ABOVE ARE SOLIDLY COVERED, BELIEVE RISKS OF ADVERSE FMG REACTION TO AN APPROACH BY USG FOR ASSISTANCE THIS MATTER SHOULD BE REDUCED.
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